

Long ago I served on this Committee. It is good to be back, and I thank the Ranking Member and Chair for the opportunity for me to testify on behalf of the Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act. It was back in 1845 that Texas became the 28<sup>th</sup> State to join the Union. At the time, the United States gained its largest state in continental America and, eventually, significantly better barbecue. The district I represent includes the historic Alamo in San Antonio. With the battle cries of “Remember the Alamo,” and “Remember Goliad,” Texas eventually won its independence on March 2, 1836. But for almost a decade thereafter, Texas was an independent nation—and you are well aware of the fact that the independent spirit of the State continues.

I live in East Austin, and only a few blocks from my house is the historic French Legation reminds us of a time when the nation of France maintained formal diplomatic relations with the nation of the Republic of Texas. Texans in turn established legations in Paris, London and some other European countries. And most importantly, a Texas delegation was sent on the very long and difficult journey from Texas to Washington, D.C. From 1836 to 1845 the Texas Legation negotiated the terms by which Texas would join the United States. Mindful, Madam Chair, of your home area because, at that time, as you know, the territory of the Republic of Texas extended all the way to Wyoming. It included all of the present State of Texas, parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado and Wyoming, as well as the area around the City of Albuquerque in New Mexico. At the time, Texas had many debts and many challenges from abroad and it took a long time to work out all the details. The Texas Legation operated out of a number of boarding houses, just down the street, near our present-day National Archives and the Navy Memorial—which is appropriate as one of the diplomats at that time was Mr. Memucan Hunt, who was also Secretary of the fledgling Republic of Texas Navy.

Today, we find plaques, as I believe you noted in your opening remarks Madam Chair, about the Texas Legation in London and Paris, but there is not yet one here in Washington. And that is what H.R.3349, a bipartisan bill that I introduced, the *Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act* would address. It would ensure a commemoration here in our Nation’s capital. It authorizes the Daughters of the Republic of Texas to create a commemorative work to honor the representatives of the Republic of Texas, who served here in the District as diplomats to the United States. This bipartisan effort is supported not only by a number of my Texas colleagues, but by Congresswoman Holmes Norton, in whose area the plaque would reside.

Once this bill passes Congress, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, which is our State's oldest, patriotic women's organization, committed to the preservation of Texas heritage and historic sites, will serve as the stewards for this work, and work together with the National Parks Service. I want to particularly acknowledge, and I believe she is here today, Kitty Hoeck, the Historian of the Elisabet Ney Chapter, representing the District, Virginia and Maryland, for the Daughters of the Republic. I have her statement to submit for the record, as well as the statement of the President General of the Daughters of the Republic and ask you to include in the record.

The history of the Texas Legation did not end when Texas became part of the Union. Today, the history of the Legation lives on in what I think is a stronger State, now with a multicultural, multilingual community. We look back to that history certainly, but we also look forward. And seize the pen to write new histories that will be even better and more inclusive to reflect our founding values. I respectfully request that the Committee approve the bill since Texas history is such an important part of the history of our country.